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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

DEMOCRACY AFTER THE WAR. By J. A. Hobson. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

America is fighting for the preservation of democracy; but America is beginning to feel a trifle disquieted by doubt as to the possible effect of the war upon democracy itself. Are we, by any chance, ourselves drifting towards "Prussianism" in the sense, at least, of excessive centralization, or perhaps towards socialism, or even towards both at once?

Whatever one may think concerning these questions, one cannot rest in the comfortable supposition that democracy after the war will take care of itself. To say nothing of the difficulty of extending democratic principles so as to make them effective in international relations, it is obvious that we must look to democracy here at home. Shall we, after peace has been won, attempt to restore democracy to its original status, or shall we allow it to expand into something that looks rather more like State socialism than democracy as hitherto conceived?

The issues of the post-war period are already looming up. In order to define these issues—that is, in order to take the first step in understanding them—it is necessary to obtain a broad and penetrating analysis of the condition of society as it is at present. Such an analysis is furnished by the Englishman, J. A. Hobson, in his recently published book, *Democracy After the War*. Although Mr. Hobson's view is based upon British conditions, it is without doubt sufficiently broad to interest Americans.

Mr. Hobson is a forceful writer—searching in logic, vehement in style, disillusioned in thought. Like others who carry the psychological point of view into sociology, he is, indeed, somewhat inclined to be in his own way extreme. But he is neither pessimistic nor unfair. Without cynicism he admits and takes into consideration those ideal motives which join with economic forces in determining social and political conditions. Plainly, it is not his object to show that men are the slaves of economic laws and that all their supposedly higher motives—including patriotism—are but pretenses or delusions. Without bitterness, he attempts to point out the connection between "capitalism," or "improperty," and the other "enemies of democracy." It is evidently not his aim to prove the existence of a deliberate conspiracy upon the part of property owners against the welfare of the people, or to preach the necessity of a class war. It is enough for him to

show that forces not in themselves wholly or necessarily evil do in fact coöperate through "a kind of instinctive cunning" to produce an evil result.

Mr. Hobson's account of society is, of course, nearly identical, so far as it concerns "impropriety," with the Socialistic account; but it should not for this reason be hastily rejected as unscientific and doctrinaire. Possibly the difference between a reformed and chastened socialism and an expanded and fully developed democracy would not in the last analysis turn out to be fundamental. However this may be, it is clear that Mr. Hobson's analysis of society from the democratic point of view differs from all the cruder varieties of socialistic analysis in that it recognizes as the enemy of human welfare not capitalism merely, but reaction. According to Mr. Hobson's view the forces of reaction include imperialism, protectionism, militarism, legalism, "distracting emollients" (such as charity, sport, and drink), regulative socialism, conservatism, State absolutism, authoritarianism, and bureaucracy. All these apparently diverse influences and interests are in fact closely interlocked. But it is important to bear in mind that the "unholy alliance" of these forces is due only in a small degree to conscious, deliberate purpose. If *all* the members of the "alliance" should suddenly become aware that a deliberate purpose, or conspiracy, in fact existed, the whole structure would doubtless fall apart. But there is individual selfishness and there is unclear thinking; and these are sufficient to effect a practical combination.

This being the case, it is obvious, Mr. Hobson maintains, that the attack against reaction should not be leveled exclusively against "landlordism" or "impropriety," since such an attack would be doomed to failure because of the powerful defences, political, moral, and intellectual, by which the enemy is encompassed. "Socialism has neither a concerted, feasible tactic, nor a sufficient number of able, trusted leaders in close intellectual and political agreement, nor a large enough body of enthusiastic, convinced, and indivisible followers." Hope, therefore, must be placed in the triumph of democracy—that is, in the complete control of the government by the people. This control, however, is evidently itself in large measure dependent upon the progress of educational reform, upon the true freedom of the press, and upon intelligent, concerted efforts directed against all the reactionary powers.

Specifically, Mr. Hobson's thesis is that after the end of the present war democracy in Great Britain will be in grave danger of a serious setback.

The danger will arise from the new economic situation and from the old international anarchy. It will be impossible, Mr. Hobson argues, to undo the work of State socialism which has been going on during the war. The same causes that made it necessary for the government to assume so wide a control over business and industry will render it impossible for the government suddenly to relinquish this control without plunging the country into economic disorder. For similar reasons, the government will retain its increased power of taxation. At the same time there will be a real necessity for increased productivity in all industries. Under these circumstances it is, in Mr. Hobson's view, inevitable that the forces of reaction will endeavor to gain control of the new machinery of the State. In internal

affairs they will work for the adoption of a system not unlike that by which Germany has enslaved its working classes, but more liberal in appearance; to this end, they will use the need of increased productivity as a lever, and an elaborate programme of social legislation as a palliative. At the same time they will work against internationalism and in favor of a "close State."

Mr. Hobson's advice to British labor is clear and definite. Acquiesce in the demand for increased productiveness, he says in effect, but resist all efforts to shift the burden of taxation by "broadening its base," and oppose all policies tending to restrict expenditures for education and for economic developments. Do not be led into the snare of syndicalism or guild socialism, but endeavor to get control of the State. Above all, stand for internationalism and reject the doctrine of the "close State."

Democracy After the War is a significant and valuable book not merely because it points out a definite policy to be pursued in a situation that has been accurately forecast, but also, and especially, because, making use of all the strong points of the Socialist account of society, it draws from this account only such conclusions as are reconcilable with belief in democracy, and holds that other and more radical conclusions are inadmissible. Implied in the whole work, however, is the assumption that before democracy can wholly prevail, "impropriety" must be abolished. If this is the case, democracy, as we at present understand it, is but a stage of evolution toward a form of socialism. On this point, it seems, more is implied in Mr. Hobson's analysis than is necessary for the support of his main conclusions, and more than most readers can readily bring themselves to accept.

TO ARMS. By Marcelle Tinayre. Translated from the French by Lucy H. Humphrey, with a preface by John Finley. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1917.

Simply as expressing the spirit of France, Marcelle Tinayre's novel holds a strong appeal for American readers. The same spirit, however conveyed to us, would win our approval and admiration. News stories, books of social sketches, the personal reports of those who have coöperated with the French in various kinds of war work, all tell the same story concerning the essential worth, the remarkable adaptability, the splendid courage of the French people. We have not the least doubt, therefore, that the novel *To Arms* is essentially sincere and truthful, and that it calls for sympathetic appreciation upon just grounds.

But this does not quite amount to saying that *To Arms* is a great or even a good novel. On the contrary, one cannot escape the conclusion that the story is in no way big enough to serve as an adequate vehicle for its theme. Instead of seeing the war through the eyes of the persons of the story, instead of feeling its effects as they feel them, the reader constantly thinks of the war apart from the story; the novel